



**Closing Statement by**

**Ms. Fekitamoeloa Katoa ‘Utoikamanu,  
Under-Secretary-General and High Representative  
for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and  
Small Island Developing States**

**At the Ambassadorial Retreat on the Comprehensive High-level Midterm  
Review on the Implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action for the  
Decade 2014–2024,**

**HNA Palisades Premier Conference Center, Palisades,  
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Excellencies,  
Distinguished delegates,  
Ladies and gentlemen,

Thank you all for a very productive, intense and forward-looking time that we have spent together reviewing the implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action and identifying possible areas for inclusion in the outcome document of the Midterm Review.

I would like to congratulate all participants for their engagement in the discussions.

I indicated in the opening that we have successfully held 2 regional review meetings in Asia and Africa and 14 thematic pre-conference events focused on trade, transport, ICT, climate change, structural economic transformation, migration and energy.

Allow me to briefly highlight some points to take away from our discussions here and that were also highlighted in the other preparatory events.

Generally speaking, there has been progress in the implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action but much more remains to be done.

Greater forging of synergies between the Vienna Programme and the 2030 Agenda and other global development frameworks was underscored.

There is need to address the financing needs for transport, energy and ICT infrastructure development in order to accelerate connectivity of the LLDCs to regional and international markets.

Development of greater connectivity has to go hand in hand with increased industrialization that can help the LLDCs to diversify their economies and increase their export potential.

We need to find ways of further stimulate the trade potential of LLDCs.

Support to implement trade facilitation reforms including implementation of the WTO Trade Facilitation agreement should be enhanced.

There is need to foster productive capacities, value addition and promote higher productivity in LLDCs. Science technology and innovations, and nurturing an

enabling business environment were noted as key drivers. It was noted that it is important to support the LLDCs to develop their private sector.

We underscored the importance of e-commerce as an area of opportunity.

Deepening of cooperation between neighbours is important to improve the integration of the LLDCs into regional and international markets.

In our meeting we noted that the LLDCs are affected by climate change, desertification and disasters and these need to be addressed in the Midterm Review.

On means of implementation the importance of enhanced domestic resource mobilization, ODA including Aid for Trade, foreign direct investment and South-South cooperation have been highlighted. The role of multilateral development banks is important. The role of international organizations including the UN system and regional organizations is critical.

Excellences, Ladies and Gentlemen

As we now move forward we indeed must build on our exchange of experiences and ideas heard today. The elements that came out of this meeting are important contribution into the upcoming intergovernmental consultations. We are now energized to complete the remaining preparatory work for the Midterm Review.

We are currently working together with ECLAC and Paraguay on the organization of the Latin America Regional Review Meeting that will be held at ECLAC Headquarters on 11 and 12 June in Chile, Santiago.

We are also organizing a few more pre-conference events including one focused on corridor development; another on trade facilitation and we are also in consultation with the World Bank to organize a joint event.

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

In concluding my remarks, I would like to thank all of you again for your engagement in the preparatory process of the Midterm Review.

I wish to thank all of the staff here at HNA Palisades Premier Conference Center for having looked so well after us.

I thank OHRLLS' staff for your support to making this meeting happen.

Kindly be advised that a report of this consultative meeting will be made available to you in the coming weeks. All the presentations and statements will be uploaded on OHRLLS' webpage of the retreat.

I look forward to continued and expanded collaboration in the coming months and years.

Thank you.